

**Sustainable Water Management Initiative
Implementation Tools Subcommittee
August 10, 2010
MEETING MINUTES**

In attendance: Ralph Abele, Kathy Baskin, Sue Beede, Lee Breckenridge, Margaret Callanan, Anne Carroll, Alan Cathcart, Sara Cohen, Karen Crocker, Rebecca Cutting, Kurt Gaertner, Mary Griffin, Phil Guerin, Audrey Lamb, Steve Long, Beth McCann, Cary Parsons, Jennifer Pederson, Martin Pillsbury, Tim Purinton, Marty Suuberg, Margaret Van Deusen

Introductions and Agenda Review

- Welcome to Marty Suuberg, who replaced Lucy Edmundsen on the Sustainable Water Management Initiative committees as a representative of DEP, as Lucy has transitioned from DEP to EPA.
- Matrix handout is staff's proposed structure for organizing the regulatory and non-regulatory tools provided by Implementation Tools Subcommittee members at the previous meeting's brainstorm session. The matrix organizes the tools according to the performance standards/objectives they could help achieve in the areas of streamflow, water supply/wastewater, and land use/impervious surface. By placing some tools in multiple places in the matrix, ideas for integrated management across categories emerge.
- Agenda for this meeting is to identify gaps in the proposed matrix, prioritize the performance standards/objectives, and refine the tools identified for the high-priority categories. Staff hopes that the committee can make meaningful headway on advancing the highest-priority objectives, within the next year or two.

Clarifications/Amendments to Matrix

- Brief discussion of the anticipated vehicles for follow-up on the products/tools proposed by the committee. Vehicles will be selected down the road, depending on the final recommendations. Suggestion that lead personnel be assigned to final recommendations to ensure continuity and follow-through.
- Discussion about "Performance Standards" shown in matrix.
 - Staff clarified that the intention was to diversify water management beyond water supply.
 - Agreement among committee members to re-title the first two columns in the matrix: Instead of "Objectives" and "Performance Standards" → use "Goals" and "Objectives," respectively, to clarify that mechanisms to achieve these were not necessarily regulatory.
- Agreement among committee members to reorganize matrix to include key wastewater objectives, alongside the water supply objectives, grouped under a larger goal of "no increases in net surcharge or net deficits" and/or possibly also under a goal of "restore water balance."
- Committee acknowledged that identifying appropriate scale will be critical in pursuing water balance policies.
- Suggestion that Matrix be introduced with a statement that the SWMI seeks to integrate stormwater, water supply, and wastewater management.

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Prioritization Discussion

- Strong endorsement to pursue the development of “Blue Communities”:
 - Municipalities would need to demonstrate key requirements around sustainable water supply and wastewater management, habitat connectivity, land use supportive of healthy stream habitat, etc. to achieve Blue Communities status, which would enhance access to grants or subsidized loans, or possibly regulatory relief.
 - Program would be comparable to existing Green Communities or Commonwealth Capital programs.
- Additional tools proposed:
 - Development Impact Fee programs were suggested as a structure leading to water banking and cap and trade at the local level. (e.g. Danvers’s Water Use Mitigation Fee)
 - Watershed-based wastewater permitting was brought up as another potential tool.
 - Suggestion to connect the MS4 NPDES stormwater permitting requirement for recharge to the Water Management Act need for offsets.
- Suggestion that basin classification could be used as benchmark to facilitate trading across categories of water withdrawals and impervious surface, both of which factor into the classification regression equation – i.e. trades could be proposed provided they not lead to a drop in class when the new numbers are run.
- Request that the Matrix include a goal to ensure adequate water supplies and that the tools for this goal include optimization of sources and subsidies for MWRA fees.
- Comment made that natural allies exist for some of our stated objectives, particularly among land protection advocates.
- Concern raised that subcommittee is not sufficiently dealing with Safe Yield and Streamflow Criteria. Clarification that these were being well addressed by the Advisory and Technical Committees.

AGREEMENT: Those present agreed that the group’s high-priority focus should be placed on advancing mechanisms for Blue Communities and on permit integration across programs.

- Mitigation and offsets could become part of both of these priorities.
- Comment made that Blue Communities involves the pursuit of integration at a local level, and permit integration involves integration at the state level, so pursuing both is a good two-pronged approach.
- Two cautions about Blue Communities raised:
 - Need to ensure incentives don’t reward simple compliance, but require going above and beyond.
 - Need to protect against driving a bigger wedge between wealthier and less wealthy communities; some incentive programs can do this by rewarding those with sufficient resources to pay for the extra measures while leaving poorer communities with even less support, by comparison.
- Suggestion to find pilot areas for these both Blue Communities and permit integration ideas – one possibility considered was the Upper Charles, which is already a focus area under an EPA Residual Designation program for stormwater management.

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Next Steps

- Staff to work with those who are interested in putting together a rough sketch of what a Blue Communities program could entail.
- Staff to look at examples of mitigation banking.
- Staff to re-look at the ideas generated by the Offsets subcommittee under the Water Management Act, several years ago.
- Look for applicability of mitigation and offsets to Blue Communities and permit integration.

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